THE ROLE OF WRITTEN PRESS IN AGING AGAINST AND AGING

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Abstract

Anti-aging is a rapidly growing social movement in society. The negative attitude towards old age, which is one of the normal life periods, has been developed, and therefore the media has an important role in mediating old age. The purpose of this study is to make a qualitative analysis of the rhetoric about the aging of the written press and to identify the messages given to it through aging news. With this aim, 4 newspapers that have high circulation in Turkey at national level and one magazine's annual publication of to the period in 2016 were screened retrospectively and identified 248 articles were taken into study. The texts and images of the news were analyzed by content analysis method. According to the findings of the study, the most mentioned issue in the news texts is that the aging can be prevented. The most common themes are aging-related risks and commercial direction of anti-aging. Nutrition and medical aesthetic applications come to the forefront among the anti-aging practices recommended by the news.

Keywords:

Medicalization of aging, Anti-aging, Media and aging

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Introduction

The function of anti-aging products and applications in everyday life is gradually increasing. One of the most important reasons for this increase is health news published via various media tools. It is frequently emphasized that benefiting from applications and practices developed in a highly profitable sector that can be called healthy life industry is a necessity to be "healthy", also these applications and practices make an individual look young and physically-fit. Thus, it leads to medicalization of aging and making people perceive aging as a condition that is a negative and diseased phase and that needs to be delayed and even to be avoided.

Monitoring the old age and course of life with a disease perspective results in regarding aging process as a closed and controlled situation. This type of approach is contrasted with the concept of "successful aging", which is defined by objectives such as continuation of social relations, taking preventive measures for health problems and approaching life positively. Estes and Binney (1989) indicated that this approach will strengthen "stamping" tendency that is widely seen in society concerning the aging people. The belief in curableness of aging prevents the understanding of social and biological dynamics related to aging person that deeply shaping the old age period (Turkish Public Health institution, 2015).

Trends in medicalization of aging have become more prominent in recent years. According to a study conducted in 2000, 30% of Americans aged 65 and above (10 million Americans) use alternative medicine for aging-related effects (Foster et al., 2000). Developments in the fields of medical sciences and clinical intervention have changed nature of life, especially in advanced ages, in a way that is individually and socially unpredictable. Medicine produces a rhetoric promising that both aging can be prevented, and life can be extended. Today, the relationship of an individual with its body and aging has been transformed, the body has become open to unlimited manipulation at any age and the effect of health authorities on life has increased. Nature of the old age has also changed greatly through clinical practices and medical innovations. Existence of therapeutic interventions has revealed expectations for improvement in terms of effects of aging and increased quality of life, as well as increased the desire to sustain life at the highest level (Kaufman et al., 2004; Rose, 2001).

In consumer society, medicine focuses on "later life effect of middle age" and tends to reconcile the risks of old age to middle ages. Individuals, usually around 55 years, are considered as "grey gold" by various sectors due to leisure time and economic levels increased with retirement. This so-called "ageless" elder market, created by sectors such as cosmetics, fashion and entertainment, redefines aging through bodily pleasures and identities (Katz et al., 2003).

"As the aging is medicalized; natural consequences of aging such as wrinkles, skin sagging and hair loss are incorporated into the subject of medicine; they have become problems that need to be corrected" (Sezgin, 2010). Bodies are subjected to numerous interventions to make their appearance aesthetic, thus to prevent, slow down or eliminate effects of aging. Individuals consult to doctors for these purposes and demand "anti-aging" applications.

This study aims to make a qualitative analysis of the rhetoric of printed press and to identify messages given to the community in this direction through news of aging.

Purpose

The research was designed in descriptive model. News on aging in four newspapers (Sabah, Posta, Sözcü, Hürriyet) and a magazine (Cosmopolitan) that have the highest circulation at national level in Turkey constitute the scope of research.

News published by these newspapers and the journal in a 1-year period between January 1, 2016-December 31, 2016 were retrospectively scanned with the keywords "aging", "old age" and "anti-aging", and 248 news directly about aging were included in the research.

These 248 articles were examined with content analysis method. Reliability of the content analysis technique depends largely on coding process. What is expected from this process is that inter-encoder adaptation rate is higher than 70% (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). For this reason, after creating themes and categories, internal reliability analysis regarding content analysis was conducted. In an analysis conducted over the first 100 news by the researcher and an independent encoder, inter-encoder compatibility was found as 86%, and internal reliability was determined to be high. Descriptive analyses (frequency and cross tables) for code frequencies, themes and categories were conducted with SPSS 22.0 package program.

Findings

A total of 248 news detected in an annual period between January 1, 2016-December 31, 2016 were examined. Most of these articles belong to Sabah Newspaper with a rate of 53.2%. Subsequently, it was determined that 18.5% of news were published in Sözcü Newspaper; 10.5% of them in Posta Newspaper, 10.1% of them in Cosmopolitan Magazine, and 7.7% of them in Hürriyet Newspaper.

Table 1: Distribution of Articles by Media Organ

Name of Newspaper-Journal	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sabah	132	53.2
Sözcü	46	18.5
Mail	26	10.5
Cosmopolitan	25	10.1

Hürriyet	19	7.7
Total	248	100

Analyzing the graphical trend of news numbers, it can be seen that intensity of news varies seasonally, and the number of aging news in the summer period has fallen considerably.

Figure 1: Number of News By Month
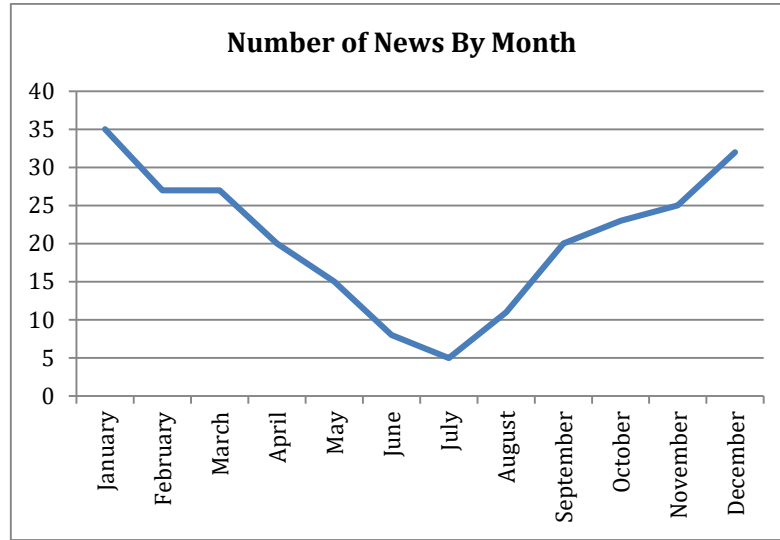
Analyzing the repetition of articles, i.e. the publication of the same content in multiple newspapers or magazines, it was determined that most of the articles were the first publication (f:226, 91.1%). Among these articles, 46.8% of them are articles; 31.9% of them are health corners, 16.1% of them are interviews; 5.2% of them are columns.

Table 2: Type of Article

Article Genre	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
News	116	46.8
Health Corner	79	31.9
Interview	40	16.1
Column	13	5.2
Total	248	100

When origin of articles are examined, it is seen that 63% of them do not show any sources. 18.1% of articles belong to a columnist and reporters. 15.7% of articles have shown a domestic news agency as a source; 2.4% of them have shown another magazine and newspapers as a source.

Table 3 Article Source

Country of Origin/Source	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Without sources	158	63.7
Columnist/Reporter	45	18.1
Domestic Agency	39	15.7
Other Magazines and Newspapers	6	2.4
Total	248	100

Texts are classified thematically under 7 headings. **Theme of aging-related risks** includes news about the risk of aging and the risks acquired by aging. The suggestions for self-evaluating by a person by giving symptom-findings, treatment and etiological factors of any diseases are classified under this theme. **Self-control theme** contains news that include healthy life news and suggestions for lifestyle regulation of a person. Under this topic, individuals are informed about what to do to be healthy, fit and have a long life. News related to commercial products and guiding towards services are coded under **commercial routing theme**; news giving food and nutrition recommendations are coded under **food/nutrition/vitamin suggestion theme**; news promoting anti-aging processes and procedures are coded under **process/procedure definition theme**; news about aging experiences of celebrities are coded under **aging experience in celebrities theme**; and news about research findings are coded under **anti-aging research findings theme**. It can be seen that risks associated with aging theme (f:67%, 27) is the most repetitive theme. The least compared themes are aging experiences in celebrities theme that contains news about aging experiences (f:9, 3.6%) and research findings that provide information on scientific studies (f:9, 3.6%).

Table 4: Article Theme

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Aging-related risks	67	27
Commercial routing	63	25.4
Food/Nutrition/Vitamin Recommendation	49	19.8
Process/Procedure Promotion	30	12.1
Self-control	21	8.5
Aging Experience in Celebrities	9	3.6
Anti-Aging Research Finding	9	3.6
Total	248	100

Considering classification of articles based on context of aging, it is determined that 45% of these articles are about preventability of aging; 23% of them are about loss of beauty with aging; 23.8% of them are about aging causing diseases; 2.8% of them are about exclusion from society with aging; 2.4% of them are about importance of healthy aging; 1.2% of them are about retirement and loosing of job; and 0.8% of them are about subject of aging and death.

Table 5: Context of Aging

Context	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Preventability/Prevention of Aging	113	45.6
Loss of beauty	58	23.4
Cause of diseases	59	23.8
Exclusion from society	7	2.8
Healthy aging	6	2.4
Retirement/Loosing Job	3	1.2
Death	2	0.8
Total	248	100

Chi-square test was applied for the relationship between context of aging emphasis and content of articles. Accordingly, there was a statistically significant difference between context of aging emphasis and making commercial suggestions in content of articles (p<.0001).

Table 6: Cross-table of Context of Aging Emphasis and Commercial Suggestion

Context of Aging Emphasis	Commercial routing exits	No commercial routing	Total	P
Cause of diseases	19	40	59	
Loss of Beauty	53	5	58	<0.001*
Preventability of Aging	68	45	113	
Other	2	16	18	
Total	142	106	248	

*Pearson chi-square value

In articles reviewed, suggestions were made towards preventing aging. The frequency distribution resulting from categorical analysis of these suggestions is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Anti-aging Suggestions

Anti-aging Suggestion	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Vitamin/Nutritional Support Product Suggestion	57	23
Medical Aesthetic Suggestion	52	21
No Suggestions	47	18.9
Lifestyle Change	46	18.5
Cosmetic Product Suggestion	19	7.7
Plastic Surgical Application Suggestion	19	7.7
Check-Up/Examination Suggestion	6	2.4
Natural/Organic Product Use	2	0.8
Total	248	100

Analyzing anti-aging suggestions in articles respectively; it is determined that 23% of articles give vitamin nutritional suggestion; 21% of them give medical aesthetic suggestion; 18.5% of them give suggestion for lifestyle change; 7.7% of them give suggestion of using cosmetic product; 7.7% of them give suggestion of plastic surgical application; 2.4% of them give physician examination or check-up suggestion; and 0.8% of them give suggestion towards use of natural organic product. In 18.9% of news analyzed, no suggestions were given.

Examining articles in terms of visual use, it is determined that 73.8% of them include visuals, and 26.2% of them do not include any visuals. Since articles with images contain various visual contents, they were examined under a separate category. After the review, visuals were divided

into 5 categories. Visuals were collected in 5 categories, including human image, pharmaceutical image, nutrition or food image, nature and soil image, and mixed content containing a combination of several contents. Frequency distribution related to categories is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Image Content

Image Content	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Human	148	80.9
Food/Nutriment	20	10.9
Mixed	11	6
Nature/Soil Theme	3	1.6
Medication	1	0.5
Total	183	100

Analyzing images used in the articles; it is determined that human theme was used in 80.9% of these articles; drug theme was used in 0.5% of them; food and nutriments were used in 10.9% of them; nature and soil theme was used in 1.6% of them; and mixed images were used in 6% of articles. Classification applied on gender selection in human images is given in Table 9.

Table 9: Gender in Images

Gender in Images	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	118	80
Male	30	20
Total	148	100

Among 148 human images examined, 118 of them include female (80%) and 30 of them include male (20%) in gender. Distribution of ages among individuals used in the images is given in table 10.

Table 10: Age periods in images

Age in Images	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Young	94	63.5
Mixed	33	22.3
Elder	21	14.2
Total	148	100

In terms of age periods, it is determined that 63.5% of articles contained images of young people, 14.2% of them contained images of elderly, and 22.3% of them contained images with both young and elderly people.

Target audience of articles were categorized by assessing content of article and its images together. Frequency distribution related to this analysis is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Target Audience

Target Audience	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	160	64.5
Male	33	13.3
No gender discrimination	55	22.2
Total	248	100

Analyzing article contents and images together, target audience constitutes of female readers for 64.5% of articles, and 12.3% of articles target male readers. 22.2% of the articles and images examined target all readers without gender discrimination. It can be said that anti-aging news targeted towards females are higher in number. It was analyzed using Pearson chi-square test whether commercial routing was different as per gender (Table 12), and statistically significant difference was found (p<.001).

Table 12: Target Audience and Commercial Suggestion Cross Table

Target Audience	Commercial routing exits	No commercial routing	Total	P
Female	97	63	156	
Male	13	20	33	<0.001*
No gender discrimination	42	13	59	
Total	152	96	248	

Conclusions

When articles in printed press were examined in the study, it was determined that mostly **news type** (46.8%) articles were included, and majority of these news (63.7%) was published without giving any sources. It was observed that number of anti-aging news varied **seasonally**, and the number of news considerably decreased in the summer. This situation is in compliance with lack of preference towards medical treatment applications during summer.

Analyzing themes of news, it was observed that the most frequent recurring themes included **risks associated with aging** (27%) and **commercial routing** (25.4%). In terms of news contexts, it was determined that mainly subjects were discussed such as **preventability of aging** (45.6%), aging as **the cause of diseases** (23.8%) and **loss of beauty with aging** (23.4%). There was a statistically significant correlation between the context of aging emphasis and commercial suggestion (p<0.05). As revealed by the results of media analysis, **commercial routing** was made in one out of every four aging news.

In anti-aging news, **visual elements** were used extensively (73.8%). For this purpose, mostly **female and young** individual images were used in articles. Examining the action situation in images, it was determined that mostly skin analysis and care/treatment application for the skin were performed. Analyzing news according to their target audience, it was determined that news targeted **females** with a rate of 64.5%, and there was a statistically significant correlation between news towards female and commercial suggestions (p<0.05).

Today, perception of refraining from aging and physical practices to conceal signs of aging are widely applied. Wide use of "youth", "subtlety" and "beauty" images by the media influences

individuals' perception of normality. The "old age" period, which can be seen as deviation from normal, has obtained characteristics of a disease that must be prevented by any means, tools or applications In the formation of such orientations, ideal body prototypes imposed by capitalist market economy and body paradigm of current period can be said to be effective. By providing a positive understanding of presentation of aging, the media can provide support for healthy aging in society. In news published in the media on the subject of aging, a supervision mechanism should be established towards making publications in accordance with "Healthy Aging Action Plan" strategy, which is also published in Turkey, in accordance with WHO suggestions. Especially in the media, idealized aesthetic emphasis should be avoided, and a self-control mechanism should be operated towards balanced use of aging and images related to elderly individuals.

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